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Qualifying Note: The Child Support Enforcement Program is a separate program administered by the Child Support Enforcement Agency. Since case managers must make sure that child support is pursued, a program overview is provided here.

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY FUNCTION

- A. The Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) attempts to establish for each eligible child the legal obligation of each absent parent (obligor) to pay child support to the custodial parent or designated payee (obligee) through:
1. Location services
 2. Legal action under State law
 3. Establishment of support amounts through court order or negotiated contract
 4. Enforcement of established child support payments

Note: CSEA will cooperate with corresponding agencies of other states to locate parents against whom support petitions have been filed and secure compliance with court orders when the obligors are believed to reside in Maryland.

- B. Eligibility for CSEA services is limited to:
1. Customers whose support rights are assigned to the State under TCA
 2. Children placed in foster care by the local department upon written application by its director
 3. Other persons who complete a written application whether or not they must pay a fee to CSEA

SERVICE FEES

- A. The following people may use support enforcement services without an application fee:
1. TCA customers
 2. Children in the custody of or the guardianship of a local department for foster care

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3. Petitioners from other states requesting Maryland to establish or enforce support payments under the Maryland Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act, Annotated Code of Maryland
 4. If a TCA case has been closed, customers do not need a new application to continue services
- B. The following people must pay an application fee for support enforcement services:
1. Persons not included in A 1 or 2 must pay a non-refundable \$25 application fee before service is rendered, however:
- Note: The application fee may be assessed only once against any obligee regardless of the number of obligors
2. An obligee who terminates child support services against all obligors and subsequently reapplies must submit a new application and pay the required fee

SERVICES

- A. CSEA , as part of its parent locator services for those seeking payment of child support, established a central registry containing all available identifying information on all parents who actually or apparently deserted their children, whether or not the children are likely to become customers of public assistance or foster care
- B. CSEA pursues legal action to establish paternity and to collect delinquent or accrued payments, including, in some cases, against a minor's parent's own parents, unless it is established that the obligor is unable to make payments, the child is married, or the child receives statutory benefits
- C. CSEA maintains a list of laboratories, for the use of Maryland circuit courts and published in the CSEA manual, that perform laboratory specific classes of blood and/or DNA tests to determine if an alleged father is, in fact the father
- D. The in-hospital paternity acknowledgement program provides brochures describing the benefits of establishing paternity and the availability of child support services as well as the opportunity for unmarried parents to voluntarily acknowledge paternity at the time of birth by using a CSEA supplied affidavit of parentage form (with instructions) which legally establishes paternity for the newborn child
- E. The collection service of CSEA collects and disburses support payments for each active case that is reviewed, either monthly or annually depending on the case type, by the assigned collection agent, testifies in court, and notifies the obligor at

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the instigation of either parent or any court proceeding or when court ordered or contractual payments are 30 days or less in arrears of what steps will be taken to enforce support obligation

COLLECTION METHODS

- A. CSEA may periodically work with the State Lottery Agency through the Lottery Intercept Program to access lottery winnings to pay support arrears assigned to public agencies when an obligor's court ordered payments are at least \$150 in arrears
- B. CSEA may work with the Comptroller of the Treasury through the Tax Refund Intercept Program to access State income tax refunds to pay support arrears when an obligor's court ordered payments are at least \$150 in arrears, but they will charge the obligee a nominal fee in non-TCA cases

<p>Note: Fees are normally \$10, but cannot exceed 25% of the amount to be distributed.</p>
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- C. CSEA may work in non-TCA cases with the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) of the U.S. Department of Health of Human Services, which, in turn, reports certain delinquent support obligations to the IRS through the Federal Income Tax Offset Program in order to access Federal income tax refunds to pay support arrears assigned to public agencies when an obligor's payment are at least \$500 in arrears
- D. CSEA's accounting practices include safeguards to protect collected funds from misuse that are in place for handling of cash receipts, deposits and accounting procedures

Additional Information

- Technical Eligibility – Child Support Requirements
- Sanctions – Child Support